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Current Class: [REDACTED]
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Document Number: 1977BUENOS00533

Page: 1

Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200000044 61

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 00533 212138Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----220532Z 002586 /11

R 212045Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8682

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

() Release (X) Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): B1

Declassify: (X) In Part () In Full

(X) Classify as C () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date 4/18/01 Declassify on Reason 25X1

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 0533

DECAPTIONED

FOR DEPUTY ASST SECY BRAY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, AR
SUBJECT: DEATH TOLL OF ALLEGED SUBVERSIVES

REF: (A) 76 BUENOS AIRES 7655, (B) BUENOS AIRES 0088, (C) BUENOS AIRES 0162

1. SUMMARY. IN PERIOD NOV 9 TO JAN 20, 315 SUBVERSIVES WERE KILLED IN ARMED CONFRONTATIONS, ACCORDING TO GOA ANNOUNCEMENTS. THE GOA MAINTAINED THAT THE DEAD WERE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN GUERRILLA OR TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, OR HAD RESITED ARREST WHEN DISCOVERED BY THE SECURITY FORCES. THIS CLAIM WAS SUPOORTED BY SOME OF THE REPORTS OF SOURCES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, THE SECURITY FORCES AND THE MILITARY. ON THE OTHER HAND, CURCUMSTANCES OF CONFRONTATIONS AND DEATHS AS REPORTED IN OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUEs WERE IN SOME CASES DIFFICULT TO CREDIT, AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT IN SOME CASES SECURITY FORCES ARE FABRICATING CONFRONTATIONS TO DISPOSE OF PRISONERS. PURPOSE OF FOLLOWING IS TO COMMENT ON THIS MATTER AND UPDATE COMMENTS ON SECURITY SITUATION SINCE BRAY VISIT IN EARLY DECEMBER. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER MASS REPRISAL KILLING OF PRISONERS BY POLICE AT PILAR ON AUG 20 (BUENOS AIRES 5468) IN WHICH 30 PERSONS DIED, THERE

PAGE 02 BUENOS 00533 212138Z

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: [REDACTED]
Document Number: 1977BUENOS00533

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200000044

WAS A PAUSE IN TEMPO OF ARGENTINE POLITICAL VIOLENCE. THE TERRORIST ATROCITY OF BOMBING OF CIRCULO MILITARY CINEMA (BUENOS AIRES 8179), IN WHICH MANY WIVES AND CHILDREN OF MILITARY PERSONNEL WERE INJURED, BROUGHT NO IDENTIFIABLE COUNTER-ATROCITY FROM THE SECURITY FORCES. ON NOV 9, HOWEVER, A TERRORIST BOMB IN POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN LA PLATA MAIMED DEPUTY POLICE CHIEF AND INJURED SEVERAL OTHERS.

3. FROM THAT MOMENT FORWARD, THE NUMBER OF DEATHS OFFICIALLY ATTRIBUTED TO OPERATIONS OF SECURITY FORCES LEAPED. IN THE TWO WEEKS FOLLOWING NOV 9 BOMBING, ABOUT 70 ALLEGED TERRORISTS DIED IN LA PLATA, AND A TOTAL OF OVER 250 WERE OFFICIALLY REPORTED KILLED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY BY THE END OF THE YEAR. AT LEAST ANOTHER 60 HAD BEEN KILLED BY JAN 20. GOA ANNOUNCEMENTS ATTRIBUTED MOST OF THESE DEATHS TO ACTIONS INITIATED BY SECURITY FORCES. REPORTED LOSSES TO GOA WERE ONE OR TWO KILLED AND A FEW WOUNDED. COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWED PATTERNS: TERRORISTS WERE CAUGHT IN HOUSES OR APARTMENTS BY SEARCHES, THEY INITIATED COMBAT WITH SECURITY FORCES, AND ALL WERE INVARIABLY KILLED. OTHERS ALLEGEDLY TRIED TO RUN ROADBLOCKS, FIRING ON SECURITY FORCES. SOME WERE DISCOVERED PAINTING SLOGANS ON WALLS; THEY OPENED FIRE ON SECURITY PERSONNEL AND ALL DIED. SECURITY FORCES RARELY SUFFERED CASUALTIES, AND THERE WERE NO WOUNDED OR CAPTURED TERRORISTS REPORTED.

4. ONLY A FEW REPORTS CLAIMED THAT TERRORISTS HAD INITIATED ATTACKS ON SECURITY FORCES. ON JAN 6, TEN CARLOADS OF TERRORISTS REPORTEDLY ATTACKED A MILITARY CONVOY TRANSPORTING PRISONERS NEAR LA PLATA. IN THE FIGHT SIX TERRORISTS DIED, TWO PRISONERS WERE KILLED IN CROSSFIRE, AND MILITARY SUFFERED NO LOSSES. DARDO CABO, WELL-KNOWN MONTONERO LEADER WHO HAD BEEN HELD BY AUTHORITIES FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS, WAS KILLED IN THIS SHOOTOUT BETWEEN SECURITY FORCES AND TERRORISTS WHO WERE SUPPOSEDLY TRYING TO HELP HIM "ESCAPE." [REDACTED] REPORT, HOWEVER, THAT WHOLE THING WAS STAGED WITH PURPOSE OF ELIMINATING CABO AND SEVERAL OTHERS.

31

PAGE 03 BUENOS 00533 212138Z

5. INFORMED OBSERVERS HAVE COME INCREASINGLY TO QUESTION CREDIBILITY OF OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE, AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT SECURITY FORCES ARE IN SOME CASES DISPOSING OF UNWANTED PRISONERS EITHER BY ADDING THEM TO THE TOTAL OF DEAD IN GENUINE CLASHES WITH TERRORISTS, OR BY SIMPLY FABRICATING CONFRONTATIONS.

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: [REDACTED]
Document Number: 1977BUENOS00533

Page: 3

Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200000044

ON THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE, WE BELIEVE THAT MANY OF THE SHOOTOUTS ARE GENUINE. THE GOVERNMENT IS PRESSING ITS FIGHT AGAINST THE TERRORISTS WITH INCREASING SUCCESS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT BUT THAT IN SOME CASES THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF INCREASED LEVEL OF ANTI-TERRORIST OPERATIONS TO RID THEMSELVES OF NUMBERS OF PRISONERS WHOM THEY DID NOT WISH TO FREE OR COULD NOT FREE OR SURFACE BECAUSE OF THE TORTURES THEY HAD SUFFERED. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE EXPRESSED TO EFFORT TO PHASE OVER TO "LEGAL METHODS." THAT IS TO BE HOPED, BUT WE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE TO SUBSTANTIATE.
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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 3

UNCLASSIFIED